

Permanent Mission of India

Geneva

25th Session of the Human Rights Council

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Annual Full Day Meeting on the Rights of the Child

Mr. President,

India welcomes the convening of the annual full day meeting on the Rights of the Child with its focus on the very important theme of "Access to Justice for children". We thank the OHCHR for a very comprehensive detailed Report addressing the definition of access to justice for children and its relation to other concepts such as child sensitive justice and juvenile justice system, legal framework and the challenges for children in accessing justice.

We concur with the OHCHR that access to justice is a fundamental right in itself and is an essential pre-requisite for the protection and promotion of all other human rights.

Mr. President India is home to the largest number of children in the world. Nearly every fifth child in the world lives in India. Naturally, we consider them our national assets. India is also one of the countries that acceded to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) in the early years of its adoption by the UN. It takes its commitments seriously. We recognize that the rights enumerated in the Convention are fundamental to the full development of the child. We believe it is critical to invest in child protection as protection failures are not only human rights violations, but are also a major, under-recognised and under-acted upon barriers to child survival and development.

Mr. President, the Indian Constitution has several provisions providing for protection, development and welfare of children. In terms of legislative measures, the Parliament of India has passed a number of laws which are specific to the protection of child rights. For India the child is an instrumental stakeholder in the social contract. We have an obligation to provide a safe and enabling environment for their development. The civil society in India is an integral and active partner in this endeavour.

Mr. President to realise our vision for our children we have undertaken significant measures towards the creation of a protective environment for them. In this regard the Government of India has adopted National Policy for Children, 2013. The policy reaffirms government's commitment to the

Provisions are also laid down for compensation to the child for any physical or mental trauma or immediate rehabilitation of the child. There is a provision for assistance of legal counsel where the child or the family is unable to afford such help. To protect the rights of children affected by civil unrest a pilot scheme called Bal Bandhu Scheme was implemented by the National Commission of Protection of Child Rights in the affected areas. It worked through mobilisation of the community through a cadre of trained local youth volunteers who acted as child right defenders. The objective of this scheme was to ensure that the rights and entitlements of children to education, nutrition, health, sanitation, and protection are fulfilled.

Mr. President, we reaffirm our commitment to national and international efforts on the promotion and protection of the rights of our children. India recognizes that childhood is an integral part of life with a value of its own, that every child is a holder of universal, inalienable and indivisible rights and a multi-dimensional integrated approach is necessary for the harmonious development of the child